

## COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

### Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach Municipal District of LOUGHREA

#### Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in the Council Chamber, Loughrea on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025

##### I LATHAIR:

**Cathaoirleach**

Cllr. M. Kinane

**Bail:**

Cllr's. M. Maher, G. Donohue, D. Kelly, P. Killilea, I. Canning,  
J. McClearn, G. Finnerty, M. Regan

**Oifigigh:**

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services  
Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer  
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer  
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer  
Mr. S. Lally, Senior Executive Engineer  
Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer  
Mr. D. O'Loughlin, Executive Engineer  
Ms. D. Feeney, Administrative Officer  
Ms. G. Byrne, Administrative Officer  
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer  
Ms. C. Kennedy, Clerical Officer

**Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of  
Loughrea held in the Loughrea Council Chamber on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**LMD2416**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District (MD) of Loughrea held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Donohue, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

**Update on the Greenway from Athlone to Galway – Stephen Lally, Senior  
Executive Engineer, Galway County Council**

**LMD2417**

Mr. Lally provided the members with an update on the Galway to Athlone Cycleway Project. He stated the walking and cycling route will connect Ballyloughane beach to Athlone Castle, and added the preferred route for the scheme was identified following a consultation process. He then advised, Westmeath County Council are undertaking a review of the previous work done and evaluating recent developments in relation to policy, greenway project delivery and greenway planning outcomes with An Bord Pleanála. He clarified the review was requested by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in light recent greenway schemes having difficulties getting through the planning approval process. He added, the report is expected shortly which will be reviewed by TII who will then advise the Project Team. Mr. Lally stated, when this is available an update will be

provided to the Members. He added, the Project Office are continuing to progress with landowner liaison.

The Cathaoirleach and Members thanked Mr. Lally and stated they look forward to the next update.

Cllr. McClearn expressed his dissatisfaction with the project, he said he has lost confidence in the Greenway Process. He stated, he would prefer if the money would be put into roads.

Cllr. Finnerty agreed that the monies should be invested in roads. He stated he would prefer the railway link be reopened from Athenry to Tuam. Cllr. Finnerty stated he has no confidence in the project.

The Cathaoirleach stated, she wished the project team would deal with areas in which it is not viable for the current proposed route to progress. She referred to a major consideration in middle-third, Maree, where a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located and asked if it is possible to consider utilising the stretch of road from Clarinbridge to Oranmore. The Cathaoirleach added, the previous Director of Services, Mr. Derek Pender, stated the suggestion will be seriously considered.

Mr. Lally stated he will take the comments back to the Project Team. He concluded, while a preferred route corridor has been identified nothing has been rubber stamped adding, the project is in the early stages.

**To consider and adopt the 2025 Annual Schedule of proposed Works of maintenance and repair to be carried out in the Loughrea Municipal District** **LMD2418**

Ms. Lowe provided the Members with a summary of the Schedule of Works for 2025 which included Restoration Improvement works, Restoration Maintenance Works and Discretionary Grant works. A copy of which was circulated to the Members in advance of the Municipal District meeting. She provided clarification with respect to funding allocations under the various programme areas.

The Cathaoirleach and Members thanked Ms. Lowe for her informative update.

Cllr. Donohue stated most representations she receives relate to the road conditions. She stated she is hopeful that the Council is getting value for money. Ms. Lowe stated, contracts have been tendered but, due to increased prices last year it made things difficult for the Roads Department. She added she is hopeful this year will be more positive. In response to the Members, she stated, the contracts have not yet been signed and she cannot confirm if Contractors will be the same as previous years, but it appeared unlikely at this stage.

Cllr. Donohue acknowledged work completed by the Gort outdoor staff and enquired if Galway County Council is equipped with sufficient resources, for example patching units, adding she doesn't think resurfacing is effective. Mr. Haugh responded, an additional velocity patcher has been provided to the Municipal District in recent years, and the district continues to liaise with the Machinery Yard regarding the standard of equipment required by the MD.

Cllr. Kelly enquired if the Community Involvement Scheme is open for new applications and enquired where the scheme is currently at. Ms. Lowe responded, the Scheme will be opened again, and the Council will continue through the lists as resources allow.

Cllr. McClearn stated that there is a lot of money available however there is never enough to complete the works that need to be done. He stated, the Department require the Council to produce a three-year programme but do not provide sufficient funding to complete it adding that roads on the programme will not be done or given the attention they need. He added, funding must be made available for tertiary roads. He stated, he is consistently raising concerns regarding Oxgrove, as have other Councillors, however there is no resolution yet. Cllr. Canning also raised concerns regarding Oxgrove Bridge. Mr. Haugh stated, the three-year programme is traditionally fully completed with certain very limited exceptions that are not funding related. NOM funding can be allocated and, if RIG funding is available as the year progresses, additional tertiary roads may be considered for improvement works. The Cathaoirleach added, the list of tertiary roads requiring work is getting longer and not enough of them are being addressed.

Cllr. Maher stated funding provided is not sufficient and should be doubled or trebled, he stated tertiary roads should be included in the Roads Programme adding they are the most important thing to address and a budget of €900,000 is not sufficient. He stated, the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) will help but works will not commence on these until August/September. Ms. Lowe responded that €900,000 is sourced from the Council's own funding but these works are also aided by grant funding. LIS funding is not applicable to the public road network but stated that CIS funding could be considered. She stated, Mr. Haugh and his team will assist the Members in this regard however the Roads Programme must be followed.

Cllr. Finnerty referred to resurfacing works completed last week on the L4515, he stated that there was approximately 1km of road not included adding he is willing to attribute NOM funding to have this section completed. He stated, this would complete resurfacing the location to the Clare border.

Cllr. Finnerty stated there is a significant amount of work to be done on the Gort to Loughrea Road as a substantial amount of patching has come away.

Cllr. Finnerty, enquired if additional roads will be considered under the Roads Programme. He enquired if engaging additional hedge cutting companies could be considered to ensure all hedges are cut during the hedge cutting period. Mr. Haugh responded that the responsibility for hedge-cutting rests with the property owner but where Galway County Council undertake such works, funding is always problematic and requested the Members to allocate NOM funding for these works when requested. Additional, Mr. Haugh stated, apart from the financial aspect, Council staff provide traffic management support to hedge cutting companies and engaging additional companies to carry out hedge cutting is not an option as the Council does not have sufficient trained staff to provide traffic management at additional locations.

Cllr. Finnerty enquired regarding works at Ballyturin Bridge he asked if the works will be completed by Council staff or others, he stated the €20,000 allocation may not be sufficient.

Cllr. Canning raised safety concerns regarding Ballyshrulie Bridge.

Cllr. Canning enquired who carries out surveys at school locations with respect to Safety Improvement Works. He referred to his previous concerns regarding the speed at which vehicles travel at Gortanumera School and enquired if a safety survey had been carried out there. Ms. Lowe

responded, Gortanumera school is included in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme. She stated the NTA propose a list of schools, and 65 schools are on the SRTS programme.

Cllr. Canning referred to a quotation he received of €650 for painting the word SLOW in a box on the road, he stated this is astronomical and enquired if the Council is receiving value for money, he enquired if such works can be carried out by Council staff. He stated, he is waiting for several months for road markings to be done, and it is unacceptable that this work is still not completed. Mr. Haugh responded, these costs are those quoted to the Council and the cost includes mobilisation, Temporary Traffic Management and insurance costs.

Cllr. Regan stated, where there are safety concerns for children, ramps should be installed near schools, Mr. Haugh stated the installation of ramps is extremely costly, may not be the most effective or appropriate solution and the MD does not have the financial resources available to install ramps at all school locations. Cllr. Kelly stated, he has allocated NOM funding for the installation of ramps at Abbey Street, Loughrea as he believes this will save lives.

Cllr. Regan stated funding should be allocated to the Regional Road at Ballynagar, where land was previously acquired to realign the road but which is currently being used as a storage site for chippings.

Cllr. Regan stated Moyglass needs to be included on the Roads Programme adding it is full of potholes.

The Cathaoirleach stated, €950,000 was allocated to rural speed limits, adding there were several proposals put forward over the years and enquired where the proposals that came 'from the floor' are currently at.

The Members confirmed to the Cathaoirleach that they received a copy of the Schedule of Municipal District Works.

The 2025 Roads Programme 2025 was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Donohue and **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn.

The 2025 Annual Schedule of Proposed Works of maintenance and repair to be carried out in the Loughrea Municipal District was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Regan and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Donohue.

The Cathaoirleach and Members extended their good wishes to Ms. Lowe on her resignation from Galway County Council and thanked her for her dedicated service during her time with the Council.

Ms. Ruane thanked Ms. Lowe for her service to Galway County Council and stated Ms. Lowe was an exceptional team leader and member.

Ms. Lowe thanked the Executive Team and Members for their courtesy and respect since she commenced working in Galway County Council in 2004.

## **Flooding Update**

**LMD2419**

Following a meeting with NPWS at the end of February, the project team have been asked to provide details on ecological surveys used to establish upper turlough habit levels, shapefiles (mapping information) on the upper habitat levels and shapefiles of the proposed scheme outline.

A number of small anomalies were found in the data while it was being reviewed, before issuing to NPWS. This has necessitated additional localised ecological surveys in the study areas. The surveys are currently underway and expected to be finalised in the next fortnight, with all required information being provided to NPWS during the first week of May.

On the Oranmore to Kinvarra, Storm Debie project, Cllr Kinane queried recent engagements between residents on the Maree Road, Council staff and a public representative. A site meeting was held, relating to proposed wall reinstatement works on the Maree Road, walls that had been damaged during Storm Debie. Mr Gallagher explained that the works and meeting were not initiated under the current Oranmore to Kinvarra project and Mr Gallagher had no direct involvement. The works were initiated by the Athenry Area office. (Note: following the MD meeting, Sean Whelan SEE confirmed that amended fencing proposals had been agreed with concerned local residents that had been affected by flood waters during Storm Debie).

## **Ceathrú an Tobair, Oranmore, Co. Galway – Taking in Charge (Declaration of a road a public road)**

**LMD2420**

The taking in charge of the road at Ceathrú an Tobair, Oranmore, Co. Galway was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Finnerty and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea.

### Section A-B-C-D:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction A with the L-4101-91, in the townland of Moneyduff and extending northeast for a distance of 206m ending at point D, all in the townland of Moneyduff.

### Section C-E:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction C, in the townland of Moneyduff and extending West for a distance of 30m ending at point E, all in the townland of Moneyduff.

### Section B-F:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction B, in the townland of Moneyduff and extending North East for a distance of 135m ending at point F, all in the townland of Moneyduff.

## **Cathaoirleach Business**

**LMD2421**

Cllr. Regan enquired why the toilets at the Long Point, Loughrea are not opened and proposed that the doors be opened from morning to evening. Mr. Haugh responded that the matter is raised annually and advised that it is difficult to stay within budget to maintain the facilities at the Long Point during the blue flag season due to purchase of materials and payment of overtime to clean toilet facilities. Cllr. Regan requested the costing for opening the facilities for a single day, this was supported by Cllr. Kelly. Cllr. Regan stated he is aware of volunteers who would clean open and

close the facilities. Mr. Haugh stated he will review this but advised, a relatively recent recruitment campaign to recruit a cleaner for local public toilets was unsuccessful as there were no applicants.

In response to Cllr. Killilea's enquiry regarding four different speed signs on a 2km stretch of road from Labane to Craughwell, Mr. Haugh responded that the matter had been noted previously and a correction requested via the project manager, he stated he will follow up on this.

Cllr. McClearn enquired if the toilet at the Portumna bathing area could be opened from St. Patrick's Day to the end of September and requested the cost of opening the facility. Mr. Haugh stated, if seasonal facilities are opened early at any one location in the MD, it would be necessary to open them in all three locations, i.e. Portumna, Loughrea and Traught. Mr. Haugh stated he will review the specific costings on an MD basis and respond to all Councillors.

Cllr. Donohue stated, Members should work collectively at the next Budget Meeting regarding funding to keep public conveniences open as swimming is an activity undertaken throughout the year. In response to her comment regarding the funding of the opening of facilities during Storm Éowyn, Mr. Haugh advised additional emergency funding was provided to cover the cost of opening the facilities at the Long Point during that period.

Cllr. McClearn stated, there are 18 spaces at the Camper Van Park, and he recently counted 35 camper vans in the green area. He stated a discussion is needed regarding extending the Campervan Park as people are using the facilities provided but are likely not paying for them. Cllr. Canning stated, the campervan park is a significant boost to Portumna at weekends adding 6 campervans were parked there on Christmas Day. He stated Portumna is missing the Shannon Oaks Hotel and the campervan provides necessary accommodation.

Cllr. McClearn requested the footpaths in Loughrea town be power washed.

In response to Cllr. Killilea's enquiry regarding other speed signs on the Tubber Road from the mart to the pitch, Mr. Haugh responded secondary repeat speed limit signage is typically not erected on the local road network. He stated he will have the speed limit signage checked and the Gort Area Engineer will revert directly.

Cllr. Canning enquired if flexi hours have been approved for Community Wardens and enquired if a Community Warden has been assigned to the Portumna Area. Mr. Haugh responded that flexibility in working hours has always been available and he will liaise with the Senior Community Warden to arrange out-of-hours inspections.

Cllr. Killilea requested an update on the Community Transport Study for Kinvara, stating assurances were given it would be available in April. Mr. Haugh responded, he will request an update from Paula Higgins.

Cllr. Canning enquired regarding signposts at the Green Door in Portumna. Mr. Haugh responded, that retexturing was complete and he had brought the matter of additional signage to the attention of TII previously but would follow-up further on this matter.

Cllr. Donohue acknowledged the good work of An Taisce Spring Clean Groups and Martin Cummins, Community Warden in the Gort/Kinvara area.

Cllr. Donohue requested an update on developments with the Town Hall, Loughrea.

Cllr. Donohue referred to a section of path that was damaged in Loughrea, she asked if this can be given attention. Mr. Haugh requested that she identify the specific location to the Loughrea/Portumna Area Engineer.

Cllr. McClearn stated the situation on the N65 at Heathlawn is becoming very dangerous due to the delay in repairing the bridge/road and where temporary traffic lights are located. He stated T.I.I. have neglected to do their job and he is highlighting it here. Mr. Haugh responded, there is an initial allocation of funding which should be viewed as a placeholder and not as a works funding allocation. The approach at this location was still being considered and he would seek an update from the TII/NRPO safety engineer.

**CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN**



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**CLLR MARTINA KINANE**

12<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**DATE**

**Motion: Cllr. Michael Regan and Cllr. Declan Kelly**

**Open of Toilet Facilities**

**I propose that Galway Co. Co. open the toilets at Loughrea Long Point as a matter of urgency to facilitate people that are using the lake and walking to the Long Point**

**PROPOSED by Cllr. Michael Regan**

**SECONDED by Cllr. Declan Kelly**

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